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Musket

LEXINGTON HIGH SCHOOL Vol. XXXIX, Issue 4 Feb. 2007

Senior Parking: On December 19, an elderly couple from Watertown took an unfortunate detour through the quad during H-block. Towing crews cleared the stairs. Nobody was injured.

Sacco and Vanzetti Film Nixed

By Danny Metzger-Traber

Up until a few weeks ago, the junior class was going to have a much different February 9th. The social studies department had organized a showing of a new documentary directed by Lexington alumnus Peter Miller about Sacco and Vanzetti, the infamous Italian anarchists unfairly executed in Massachusetts in the 1920s.

Miller would have come to his hometown for the day, and juniors would have been excused from class for three blocks in order to watch the movie and partake in a question and answer session with the director. English teacher Amy Hyett, one of the organizers of the event, said that in addition to the historical significance of the film, "its themes of injustice, treatment of immigrants, cultural clashes during times of war, free speech, are all resonant in today's times."

The social studies department's American history and American studies teachers had specifically set the date to coincide with their classroom studies of Sacco and Vanzetti's time period.

Due to the precarious time requirements of the screening, the Curriculum Cabinet, made up of the various department heads and deans, were asked to approve the event. Ultimately, the Cabinet decided that the showing would take too many students out of too many other curriculum classes, and the event was canceled.

Social Studies Department Head Robert Collins stressed that, "In this particular case, the Cabinet does not question

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Needham High Eliminates Honor Roll Publication

Administration Strikes Blow Against Student Stress

By Warren Tai

In mid-December, Needham High School's principal, Paul Richards, made the decision to end the long tradition of publishing the names of students who make the honor roll in the local newspaper.

The carefully thought-out decision was made after a parent raised the concern that publishing the honor roll hurts the learning environment and adds to the stress and competition students face in high school.

The honor roll is a list of students who earn nothing less than A's and B's on their report card each quarter of the school year. Some students feel that making the honor roll gives them a feeling of accomplishment and satisfaction and, at the same time, allows them to be recognized by the local public.

This issue has sparked much debate, gained attention from the media, and was even featured as a joke on NBC's "The Tonight Show." Principal Richards has received many responses from both parents and students. Roughly half supported the decision, while many others are prepared to fight it.

Those who support his decision feel that the absence of the honor roll not only promotes learning, but eliminates the elitism and exclusion that it creates. It causes students who do not make the

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Student Places Third in National Science Fair

By Gita Ramamurti

This past December, LHS senior Arjun Ramamurti went to New York City to participate in the national finals of the Siemens Competition, one of the country's most prestigious math and science competitions for high school students.

Known until 2005 as the Siemens-Westinghouse competition, it offers college scholarships of $100,000 to the first place winners in the Individual and Team categories. Out of the more than 1,500 initial applicants, only six individuals and six teams competed in the finals.

Arjun finished in third place and received a $40,000 scholarship. The first place winner was Dmitry Vaintrob. a senior from Oregon, who worked on a very complex math problem (Dmitry also happens to be good friends with Mrs. Finkelstein, a teacher at Diamond Middle School).

During the competition, Siemens went to great lengths to make sure the finalists and their families had a great time. As Arjun says, "they didn't spare any effort." The finalists were housed at the Embassy Suites hotel in New York City, situated on the shore of New York Harbor. They were taken out for dinner at the New York Museum of Science and greeted with lavish gift bags and souvenirs at every turn. They also saw The Lion King on Broadway, followed by a special behind-the-stage tour. But Arjun says he got the biggest thrill out of seeing his picture, along with those of the other finalists, flashed on the Jumbotron in Times Square.

The finalists met several influential figures in the Siemens Corporation, such as CEO George Nolen. In addition, the competition results were announced in a live press conference, in which US Secretary of Education, Margaret Spellings, presented the awards. Out of all of these people, though, Arjun says he "most enjoyed meeting the other very intelligent and interesting finalists."

In the competition, the finalists had to give a presentation before a panel of 14 judges chosen specifically for their expertise in fields relating to the various projects. The judging panel included a Nobel Prize winner, senior professors from major universities, such as Harvard, Princeton,

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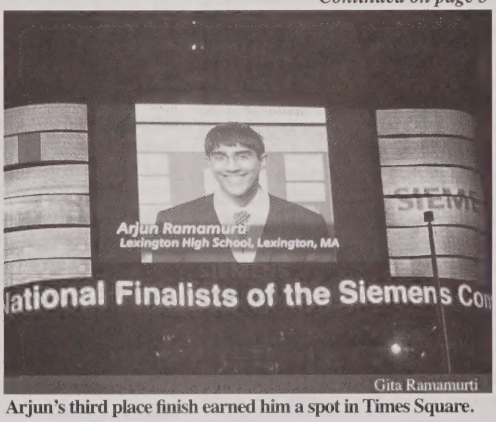

Arjun's third place finish earned him a spot in Times Square.

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ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Karen Snyder

Alt-Rock meets Cabaret in Amanda Palmer's original production for the ART.

LHS Alums Shine in Onion Cellar

Amanda Palmer amd Claire Davies Impress in ART Production

By Rivka Barrett

In 2004, the head of Cambridge's American Repertory Theater (ART) happened to hear an album by the Dresden Dolls, the dynamic Boston-based punk cabaret duo. Inspired, he called Amanda Palmer (LHS '94) and Brian Viglione, singer and drummer respectively, and invited them to produce a theatrical piece for the ART.

Palmer says she knew exactly what she wanted. As a teenager at Lexington High School, she had read "In the Onion Cellar," a chapter in Gunter Grass' *The Tin Drum*. In the book, people come to the Onion Cellar to cut onions and cry for emotional release. Palmer was taken with this idea, and seized the opportunity to base a play on it.

This past December, when I entered the ART, I was greeted by a man in a pink-and-black striped shirt, black jacket, matching black knit cap, and eyeliner. When the inner doors opened onto a chandeliered entrance, people walked in and seated themselves at cabaret-style round tables scattered around the room. Each table had a small white candle that burned throughout the performance. Light bulbs lined the edge of the stage and dangled from the ceiling. Dresden Dolls music played in the background.

The stage itself was bare except for a keyboard and a drum set. Everything was bathed in a dark red light and dark red curtains hung in the back. Out in the audience, to one side of the room, there was an operating bar, staffed by waiters circulating through the crowd taking orders.

After a time, Viglione came onstage in a black suit with tails, white face paint, and black lipstick. He started strumming on a guitar. Palmer emerged, in a t-shirt, garter and tights, and began to sing near the stage. Minutes later, Palmer's and Viglione's onstage alter egos, played by Claire E. Davies (LHS '95) and Brian Farish, took their places at the keyboard and drums as Palmer and Viglione walked into the crowd.

The characters in the play began to introduce themselves. A large man in a red suit with a white fluffy collar walked onstage. More of the cast started to emerge: an old man in a black suit, a circus bear, Onion Boy, Mute Girl. The man in the red suit, played by Remo Airaldi, intoned: "Whatever happens in the Onion Cellar … stays in the Onion Cellar."

Within minutes, socially awkward Onion Boy fell in love with Mute Girl. A bartender found romance with the circus bear, who turned out to be a young woman with intimacy issues. These characters inspired a great deal of both laughter and pity.

Dysfunctional father-daughter relationships provided a common theme in The Onion Cellar. The young woman in the blue dress repeatedly tried to phone the old man in the black suit, but all in vain, as he drowned his sorrows in red wine. The man in the red suit shared stories about his relationship with his own father. Describing himself as an emotional young boy, the man revealed his strict father's obsession with his not crying, and the many lengths he had gone to in order to cry in secret. A middle-aged husband and wife from Wisconsin sat among the audience at the bar, and mingled with the audience. At first, their apparent naiveté was a source of comic relief.

Later, secrets began to spill out. The mother of the young woman in the blue dress described how her daughter collected tears, filling up jar after jar. The Wisconsin couple shared their own sorrowful past – the wife was infertile, and blamed herself for "killing" her unborn children.

The Dresden Dolls ended with "Sing," as the various members of the cast came onstage, their voices overlapping as they told their own personal stories. This was a stirring emotional finale to *The Onion Cellar* but not the official ending. The Dresden Dolls came back onstage for an encore of several requested songs before leaving the stage entirely.

Afterwards, I questioned Palmer about the plot and production of the

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X-Mas Flicks: "Same Old Drivel"

By Danny Metzgar-Traber

The holidays have come and gone, and now we're left to pick up the cinematic pieces. This season's holiday films are far too similar to Christmas cookies baked by a sophomoric chef: some were undercooked, others burnt, and all left the consumer with a bad taste in their mouth.

Unaccompanied Minors, while created by a wonderful group of artists, just never finds its feet throughout its 88 minute run. The director, Paul Feig, was responsible for the cult hit TV show "Freaks and Geeks," as well as some episodes of "The Office" and "Arrested Development." With that kind of background, *Unaccompanied Minors* is an utter disappointment. The storyline is a mixture of *Home Alone* and *The Breakfast Club*, except without enough of the good qualities which turned these films into classics.

The movie takes place on Christmas in an airport where kids who were traveling alone are snowed in. This intrepid band looks past their physical and economic differences to create a special Christmas for themselves, despite the best attempts of a pack of bungling security guards. Big on slapstick, low on sticking value, this movie is only suitable for those who would need adult accompaniment.

The Christmas medley continues with *Black Christmas*, a remake of the 1974 movie with the same name. The story follows psychotic killer William Edward Lenz, who was mistreated as a child and eventually murdered his mother... Well, killed her and made her into Christmas cookies.

Flash forward and William has escaped from prison and comes home for Christmas. Unfortunately, his home is now occupied by sorority sisters. The rest of the plot is self-evident. While the original was groundbreaking, the remake is hackneyed. For a current horror film, it lacks the innovation of *Saw*, and the irony of *Scream*. The methods of slaughter are boringly repetitious, and the overuse of cell phones is just plain unimaginative.

The last movie on our platter of Christmas delights boasts nothing more than a good cast. *Deck the Halls* is a sad attempt by film companies to cash in on the Christmas spirit. Its stars, Matthew Broderick and Danny DeVito, can barely pull out any laughs from the mediocre material.

In the movie, Christmas-happy dad Matthew Broderick becomes increasingly irate when Danny DeVito moves in across the street and begins turning his house into a gaudy light display suitable for the strip, and their escalating feud eventually alienates their chirpy wives.

The film follows our now standard archetype for Christmas rubbish: Christmas spirit, followed by hatred and jealousy, and finally a hollow forgiveness meant to remind America what the holidays are really about.

The movies would be disappointing if Christmas movies elicited any sort of expectation. This batch is the same drivel we've grown to expect from a cash-hungry movie industry. We should just stop going to see these movies, staunch the hemorrhaging of horrible holiday films. That new Vince Vaughn Christmas movie looks good, though…

Musket

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FEATURES

Jana Qiao

The all-female a cappella group Sortis dresses up as moose for holiday concert.

Holiday Concert Brings Merriment

By Devaki Raj

On December 22, during H-Block, the school auditorium began filling up with students excited for the annual a cappella Holiday Concert. Andy Beyer and Brian Wang entertained the audience with some freestyle beat-boxing before Brian O'Connell, lovingly known as OC, followed through with a brief concert introduction.

Sasha Wilson and Raffi Sweet were co-presenters for the duration of the show. Wearing a Cat in the Hat outfit, Raffi entertained the crowd with jokes. Mixed Nuts opened the concert with the song "Perhaps, perhaps, perhaps," led by Peter Moriarty.

The new a cappella group, Onomatopoeia, sang "Things I Will Never Say," by Avril Lavigne for their first holiday performance. Beth Wobbe led the song.

The audience was very excited for the next group to take stage. Guacamole opened with a short song, "Talking About Music," an original piece with lyrics by Julie Osburne-Rothstein. The mood and excitement in the auditorium increased a hundred-fold with the song "Thriller," lead by Julie. The group also entertained the audience with a dance accompaniment.

The next group to take the stage was Sortis, dressed in black with reindeer hats, singing the holiday classic, "Grandma Got Run Over by a Reindeer." The all-senior group, Zest, lead by Micki Chernick, sang "Kissed by a Rose" by Seal lead. The all female group, Euphoria, accompanied by Andy Beyer sang "No Scrubs." Christina Ramos sang the lead.

Next, the Madrigals took to the stage to ceremoniously end the concert with the seasonal classic "Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas." Madrigals invited alumni onto the stage to join them in this song, and the audience was surprised and delighted to find that many people who graduated as many as 5 or 8 years ago still knew all the words and harmonies. LHS's cream of the singing crop, past and present, locked arms and enchanted to crowds with their holiday spirit. The concert was a success.

LHS Hosts Debate Tournament

By Helen Goodman

Between Friday, January 12 and Monday, January 15, LHS was taken over by the annual "Big Lex" debate tournament. Student debaters came from all over the country to participate in one of the northeast's most important debate events of the year.

In the varsity Lincoln-Douglas division, 110 students came to debate the current topic, which states that corporations should be held to the same moral standards as individuals. Lincoln-Douglas debaters compete individually and deal primarily with value theory rather than evidence. The winner of the varsity division was Joan Gass from the Hockaday School in Texas.

In Policy, students compete in teams of two, and they use reasoning as well as evidence. Approximately 130 teams of two competed in the novice and varsity divisions, and some of them flew in from as far away as Georgia, Florida, Utah, and Texas. Teams from Chattahoochee High School in Georgia and the Bishop Guertin School in New Hampshire won the varsity and novice divisions, respectively.

Over 200 of these debaters were housed with Lexington debate families. In addition to sharing their bedrooms with traveling debaters, LHS students spent many hours helping out at the tournament and making sure that everything ran smoothly.

Senior policy debater Stas Moroz was especially impressed with the tremendous contributions of some of the younger debaters on the home team. "Even ninth graders who have only been in the activity for a few months helped out non-stop for three days," said Moroz.

Overall, the tournament was a success for both Lincoln-Douglas and Policy. "The tournament is a good fundraiser," explains senior policy debater and housing coordinator Kelsey Savage. By charging entry fees and selling concessions, meals, and t-shirts, LHS students raised money to put toward travel for the rest of the debate season. We wish LHS debate students continued success in the coming months.

One More From Zappa

By Michael Passarini

When Frank Vincent Zappa succumbed to prostate cancer in December of 1993, he left behind a legacy few other musicians could hope to equal: 57 albums released under his name, with content ranging from bluesy hard rock to dissonant modern electro-orchestral suites, several home videos, a major motion picture, and even an autobiography, the flippantly irreverent *Real Frank Zappa Book*. In addition, Zappa had been taping every concert he'd performed since the early 1970's, leaving a plethora of unreleased recordings within his archival vault at the time of his passing.

In the years since his death, a fair amount of this material has been made available to the public, the most recent being the guitar solo compilation *Trance-Fusion*.

As with its predecessors *Shut Up n' Play Yer Guitar* (1981) and *Guitar* (1988), the album is a collection of particularly inspired solos, culled from live performances and presented out of their original context.

Like the aforementioned records, listeners are treated to a typically eclectic showcase of Zappa's highly idiosyncratic guitar stylings, ranging from the bluesy and jazz-inflicted ("Chunga's revenge," "After Dinner Smoker") to that which is best simply described as classically Zappa ("Bowling on Charen," "Light is All That Matters").

This of course is counterbalanced by the spectacular contributions from the various featured backup musicians, especially drummers Terry Bozzio, Vinnie Colaiuta and Chad Wackerman, whose inventive, virtuosic playing is reason alone to hear this album.

One only has to listen to the laid-back improvisations of "Bowling on Charen" or the stark reggae groove of "Diplodocus" to realize the clever acumen of this music.

This particular disc is a treat for fans of Zappa's 1988 tour, with no less than nine of its sixteen tracks taken from that particular outing, including a great "City of Tiny Lites" solo guitar performance (re-christened here as "Scratch & Sniff").

Not all is perfect. *Trance-Fusion* sometimes comes off to this reviewer as a bit lackluster. While the album does feature a fairly generous amount of adventurous experimentation on Zappa and his ensemble's part, there is still noticeably less than one would expect from a record of this nature.

Nonetheless, *Trance-Fusion* is a satisfactory follow-up to Zappa's previous guitar-collage records, and adds yet another item to one of the most spectacular, yet most misunderstood, bodies of work in the realm of 20th century music.

Senate News Update

By Eric Eid-Reiner

The Senate passed, with two nay votes, a bill that eliminates the requisite study hall teacher signature on library passes of students without open campus who wish to go to the library during a study hall. Students without open campus will still be required to bring their passes (signed by the teacher who issued the pass as well as stamped by the library) back to their study hall teachers before the block ends.

The bill's rationale reads as follows: "Because timestamps on library passes show time of entrance and exit, study hall teachers can easily see if the student spent the time that they were not in the study hall in the library."

Dr. Jones vetoed this bill, citing concerns about the burden that this may place on librarians, as well as potential issues with the school's ability to keep track of where students are.

In a 27-to-10 vote, the Senate passed a bill stating that "announcements for homerooms will be printed one-sided and will be posted in every homeroom in a conspicuous place until they are replaced by the next homeroom announcements." The bill stipulates that announcements containing a passage of 30 words or less are to be read aloud. However, the bill gives homeroom teachers the option of reading additional words.

Supporters of the bill felt that the essential content of announcements can be written in a more concise manner, and that the bill's passage would allow more time in homeroom for relaxing and building casual relationships between faculty and students.

Opponents of the bill saw it as unnecessary, and felt that there is not presently a shortage of down-time in homeroom, and that the 30-word limit was arbitrary and too small.

Dr. Jones asked the Senate to delay putting the new policy into effect for two months before establishing it as a permanent one. In accordance with Jones' wishes, the Senate has since passed, this time unanimously, the homeroom announcements bill, amended with a clause limiting the policy's duration.

EDITORIALS

No Stricter Standards for Extracurriculars

By Ann Wang

The dumb jock is a well known stereotype that populates nearly every book, movie, or bad joke made about secondary education. High school athletes are often criticized or mocked for failing classes and skipping school while escaping the consequences.

The Lexington High School's athletic department, a member in good standing of the MIAA (Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association), makes an effort to stop athletes from exploiting their importance on the field.

Athletes, good or bad, are required to be at least adequate students first, or else are barred from playing. But do such policies, when applied only to athletes, constitute reverse discrimination?

The Student-Faculty Senate recently discussed applying the same requirements to other extracurricular activities which demand similar "large time commitments" as team practices. Rule #58 in the MIAA's handbook only requires athletes to be passing four major, yearlong classes. The LHS athletic department specifies that the student must maintain an overall GPA of 2.0 or above, including grades received in electives such as art and gym.

Under the Senate's proposal, any student participating in a club which regularly meets five hours or more every week would have to meet the same school requirements.

According to Larry David, the Senate's assistant moderator, the proposal was supported by students who felt the athletic department's regulations created an inequitable situation. Currently, club members can participate in extracurricular activities regardless of their GPA or N status, while athletes are held to much more stringent standards.

Much like athletes have been accused of doing, such students "become a star in their area," "make themselves indispensable," and take advantage of their position to "flout the rules." As David points out, students are at school to focus on curricular activities, and this should be their first priority.

Although Senate members did not name specific extracurriculars, the drama department would have been among those activities most drastically affected by the bill. The fall musical, the spring play, Winterfest, Globefest, and so on, require from the students a time commitment of up to three or four hours every day, five days a week.

Not coincidentally, Mr. Bogart, a drama teacher, had "strong reservations" about the Climate Committee's proposal. He felt it would be unfair to apply an across-the-board rule to all activities, when cases would be better dealt with on an individual basis. He says that he has known several students who "wouldn't have made it without drama." Rehearsals for the musical or play served as motivation to get to school in the first place.

These students were successful at LHS' drama department but struggled academically, and then went on to be successful in all respects in college. "What would have happened to these kids if they weren't allowed to do drama?" Bogart asks. He also does not necessarily agree with the MIAA rules, adding, "but I'm a radical."

The Senate ultimately turned down the idea. One of the main problems facing the bill would have been enforcement. The burden of executing the new rule would most likely have fallen on the weary shoulders of teachers and deans, who already have significantly larger workload this year due to the effects of the failed override. It is unlikely that such a policy could be upheld without practicing selective enforcement.

David stated that, judging from past years, at most one or two students every year would have fallen afoul of the bill. However, the idea sparked discussion in Senate and highlights the difficulties of applying an inflexible rule to an entire student population in a highly impersonal manner.

"...the suggested bill fails to deal with the issues at the foundation of students' academic struggles."

The proposal's intentions and its recognition that kids in non-sport activities are also susceptible to falling behind in school are admirable. However, the bill, had it passed, would have been plagued by deeper issues than its execution.

Athletics and drama, for example, take place in very different environments within LHS. The 2.0 GPA rule of the athletic department has the support of the statewide MIAA and exists in the context of many other rules regulating participation in athletics.

To choose one of those standards and apply it to another activity in school, without the support of that activity's advisors and without an organization like the MIAA backing it up, is arbitrary and ill-considered.

Applying the same standard across the board is equitable, but often the most effective rules are those that are flexible to different situations. Most importantly, the suggested bill fails to deal with the issues at the foundation of students' academic struggles.

It focused instead on the superficial characteristics of something that would be better addressed by an initiative effort headed by parent, student, and teacher cooperation.

Jana Qiao

Science building doors lack size and handles; many inconvenienced by absurdity.

Half-Doors Incite Outrage, Joy

By Ben Carter

The "half-doors" of the science building are a celebrated part of LHS folklore. Roughly 80 percent of students frequent at least one of the two sets of half-doors over the course of the day. The story of the half-doors is one of calamitous congestion and fierce frustration. It is a saga that *The Musket* set out to uncover.

The doors' startling inefficiency is largely at fault for the science building's disproportionate overcrowding. In order to quantify this, we created the Musket Door Efficiency Scale – a simple door to entranceway flow ratio. On our scale, the half-door facing the math building ranks .154, while the door facing the quad weighs in at .091. The average LHS door ranks around .600.

The efficiency issue is more than a simple matter of door size. (Interestingly, the colloquially dubbed "half-doors" are, in fact, two-thirds the size of their standard counterparts.) "The half doors are on the side for people to get into the building, but they have no outer handle," gripes Senior Max McKenna. "Someone coming from inside has to open it, and they either open it into someone's face or someone ends up crushing their fingers."

For many, the half-doors are a cherished part of LHS. "It builds school character with people helping each other by opening the smaller doors for each others," says Senior Kevin Schuster. Members of the science faculty are largely supportive of the doors. "The doors represent the diversity we have in the school. Some are big, some are small," says one anonymous teacher.

The origin of the half-doors remains an unknown. One school janitor, who wishes to remain anonymous, states that neither he, nor anyone else on the maintenance faculty is privy to these doors' mysterious beginnings.

Speculation runs rampant among the student population. To many, the half-doors – like the puddle in front of the foreign language building and the open walkways that cut across campus – are simply another quirk of LHS' California-style campus. Senior David Youngwirth attributes much of the school's design to the educational experimentation and reform movement of the 1960s. Two administrators declined to comment on the issue.

While the half-doors present a formidable obstacle for larger members of the school community, more serious questions have been raised over handicapped access. Senior Melissa Lehman expresses concern for her wheelchair-bound friend. "[The half-door] is frustrating for the handicapped citizen and her helper to wheel a wheelchair through. It's better to have two doors instead of a doorframe and a half."

Some members of the LHS Student-Faculty Senate are aware of these access issues. But legislative action proves problematic, as the Senate's jurisdiction does not extend to the allotment of school funds.

Senior senator Eric Eid-Reiner says that he would be willing to co-sponsor a Senate resolution expressing dissatisfaction with the half-doors. "I'd be interested in examining the building codes regarding doors that not only a wheelchair can go through, but that a person in a wheelchair can go through without assistance," says Reiner, who plans to explore the issue in greater depth during an upcoming Policy Committee Meeting.

The future of the half-doors remains uncertain. The science building has had its fair share of technical troubles in recent days. In late 2004, a carbon monoxide scare forced the closing of the building, and flooding has been a persistent concern for the bottom floor. This year, the chemistry department has been forced to grapple with frigid temperatures and classroom ventilation issues, which have significantly limited laboratory activities.

"Its not like they're going to rebuild the school," admits McKenna. "But it would be an easy fix to put a handle on the outside."

NEWS/A&E

Karen Snyder

Claire Davies impressively portrays Palmer's alter ego during *The Onion Cellar*.

Onion Cellar Impresses

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play. Many of the characters in *The Onion Cellar* do not appear in Grass' book. "They were created by the actors in workshops and improvs we did about a year ago," Palmer reports. "We told the actors to just use their imaginations to come up with characters."

The cast of *The Onion Cellar* rehearsed for a month. The production went through several revisions before making it onstage. "The original concept was to really create a real club called the Onion Cellar ... I literally wanted people sitting at tables, cutting onions, weeping," says Palmer.

The director hired for *The Onion Cellar* was inexperienced with the workshop method. Tensions developed between his artistic conception and Palmer's, and he changed the original concept to fit his own ideas. Although Palmer feels that the director's concept deviated from her original vision, she acknowledges the success of the final product.

Palmer graduated from Lexington High School in 1994. Today she cites teachers Steve Bogart and Michael Fiveash as role models. Palmer says she continues to be influenced by her artistic upbringing within the drama department at LHS. She says, "I was really raised dramatically by Bogart, and he had and continues to have a huge effect on the way I view art. It's exceptional to be exposed to that depth of theater at age fifteen." Her preference for workshop pieces also stems from that time, particularly Globefest: "I really loved that process, so after I left high school, in all of the shows I did, I used the process myself."

Claire E. Davies played Palmer's alter ego in *The Onion Cellar*. She graduated from LHS a year after Palmer, in 1995. Like Palmer, Davies found an artistic influence in Steve Bogart She shared her experiences with me about working with Palmer: "Having been brought up in a workshop theatre tradition at LHS, I had certain expectations going into the project." She acknowledges the director's inexperience with the workshop process. "The ART has a lot of things going for it. However, I think they had certain expectations for the piece that differed from Amanda's vision," she admits.

The events in *The Onion Cellar* had an emotionally powerful impact on the audience. People walked out of the theater, amazed and off-balance. Still, the pieces in the play did not tie together seamlessly. The Dresden Dolls played many of their popular songs, including "Coin-Operated Boy," "Sex Changes," and "Delilah." But the songs, strong in themselves, did not fit in with the action onstage. To one unfamiliar with the Dresden Dolls' work, the production would seem somewhat haphazard.

Nonetheless, *The Onion Cellar* was an extraordinary piece of work. Palmer's piano playing and vocals were exceptional, while Viglione pounded away at the drums with stunning energy. Their music, combined with original theater, made for an unforgettable evening.

Sacco and Vanzetti Film

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the intellectual integrity of the film or the importance of its content to the United States History curriculum."

The Cabinet decided that such a massive disruption of an entire grade across all the academic areas would simply be too intrusive.

The Curriculum Cabinet did, however, offer some alternatives. They said they would look favorably upon the same program being presented on a voluntary basis after school. They also suggested that the film be presented only to students in American Studies courses since it was those teachers who made the original proposal. A third suggestion was to hold the event during a morning of MCAS when juniors would otherwise not be in school.

Many members of the social studies department were shocked and saddened with the curriculum committee's decision. Hyett, said that she felt "disappointed it was not approved." Some social studies teachers thought the Cabinet's decision was a slap in the face of the social studies department, which had unanimously agreed that the film would have been a valuable experience for students. Others questioned why the issue had to be brought before the Curriculum Cabinet in the first place.

Due to the decision of the Cabinet, the filmmaker has been disinvited and the pre-theatrical showing of the Sacco-Vanzetti documentary will not be screened at LHS on February 9.

Needham Honor Roll

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list to be outcasts and feel academically inferior to others. There is also the notion that the honor roll is unfair, in that students who take low-level courses have a relatively easier time making the list than students who load up on high-level honors classes.

On the other hand, some argue that not publishing the honor roll is unfair to students who put a great deal of effort into their academics. The honor roll serves to encourage academic achievement by rewarding diligence and perseverance.

Here's my take: In an academic environment that is as cut-throat as Needham High School, academic pressure on students is a matter that cannot be ignored. In the past two years, four students from Needham have committed suicide, and all incidents were linked to academic stress. These serious tragedies cannot be ignored; something must be done in order to prevent future cases.

The super-competitive high school environment may be to blame, as many students try to earn perfect grades, while juggling several extracurricular activities in order to seem like the "perfect" applicant to the college admissions board. There is no room for error.

It seems legitimate to take action to reduce such extreme classroom pressure and unhealthy student stress. However, I do not think terminating the publication of the honor roll is an appropriate measure.

Even if stress does come from not making the public honor roll, what is the big deal? Think about it. The town newspaper does not only publish the honor roll - it also lists sports teams' scores, and reports on individuals who win local or national competitions and awards.

Would displaying an article about the school's football team losing the state championships cause stress to the players and their familites? Would featuring an All-State violinist on the front page cause others to feel like failures? Maybe, but ending these publications for these reasons is unjustifiable. Achievement should be recognized. Greatness should not be torn down.

I disagree with Principal Richards' declaration because of its twisted assumption that ending the publication "promotes learning." Part of the learning process is learning how to deal with disappointment. When you can't reach your goal, you have to learn how to accept it and move on.

Also, even if you did your best but still fell short, take pride in your effort. There are always going to be times when we've done all we can and still miss the mark. There is no way to learn how to deal with disappointment without experiencing it firsthand. This is where Richards is doing more harm than good. Richard's coddling of students will only stunt their abilities to grow up and face the real world.

Then, how should the stress factor be dealt with? Instead of taking away the honor roll, the faculty and parents should channel their efforts to teaching students how to deal with pressure and disappointment. Perhaps we can begin to move away from the all-consuming college crunch. Issues certainly need to be addressed, but the honor roll is not one of them.

Students who achieve during their high school career, academically or otherwise, deserve to be recognized for their efforts. And for those other students who may not make the honor roll or be named an all-scholastic athlete, learning to rebound from disappointment is an important asset to have, both in high school and beyond.

Siemens Science Competition

Continued from page 1

Yale, and Columbia, and was headed by Kathryn Thornton, a former NASA Astronaut who holds the women's record for the most hours spent walking in space.

Arjun worked with LHS biology teacher Dr. Susan Offner on his project, which focused on the evolution of a specific group of monkeys, the Guenon. He used multiple methodologies, including genetic analysis, to propose a possible evolutionary history for the Guenon, something that has long baffled evolutionary biologists. This sort of work could offer insights into understanding the evolution of other primates, including humans.

Unlike the other national finalists, who worked at major labs or universities, Arjun performed most of his research at school. "Dr. Offner's enthusiasm and knowledge were essential to the success of my project. This whole experience is really a testament to Dr. Offner and the LHS science department," says Arjun.

During the national and regional levels of the competition, Arjun and the other participants were bombarded with interviews. These ranged from interviews with local newspapers, like the Boston Globe, to chatting with NPR reporters, and even to appearances on local news channels. Siemens also inserted a full page advertisement in the USA Today congratulating the finalists on their achievement.

Arjun strongly encourages other students at LHS to apply to the Siemens Competition. He says he would be glad to answer questions they might have.

Looking back, Arjun is very happy that he decided to listen to Dr. Offner, who initially encouraged him to apply to the competition. "The competition forced me to do a lot of extra work," he says, "but it was a great experience and well worth it."

SPORTS

Basketball Team Stays Undefeated

Coach Farias Notches 500th Career Win

By Tsung-Tang Shen

Could this be the year the Minutemen go all the way? Only time will tell, but so far, the boys basketball team has demonstrated perfection. With their recent close win over Woburn and romp over Wakefield, the team ran its season record up to an unbelievable 16-0.

What's been most impressive about this year's squad has been their margins of victory. They have been rolling over opponents by sizable scores. An eleven point victory over Reading (59-48) was their closest game of late.

For the past month, the Boston Globe has rated the Lexington team the third best in Eastern Massachusetts trailing closely behind undefeated Catholic power Boston College High and Boston's Madison Park High.

The high point of the season so far was the impressive victories the boys scored in the tough Chelsea Tournament over the Holidays when they cruised to the championship over some of the top teams in New England, including Connecticut's perennial power Wilbur Cross High.

On the heals of that performance the boys helped longtime Coach Bob Farias grab his 500th career victory with the Reading win. This victory was clearly a memorable moment in Farias' illustrious 35-year coaching career.

The strength of this year's Minuteman team has been the clutch shooting and all-around performance of Senior Co-Captain Tom Henneberry, who is currently the third highest scorer in the Middlesex League. Henneberry may well be on his way to copping the league's MVP as did last year's LHS star, Jimmy O'Keefe.

Henneberry has been ably assisted by a strong front line led by Matt Cunha and Mike Andryauskas who have virtually owned the backboards against LHS' opponents.

Also contributing to the team's incredible streak has been Senior Co-Captain Ross Curley and Senior point guard Sean Sullivan, both of whom have hit key three pointers in recent contests.

Perhaps the most pleasant surprise for Farias has been the emergence of sophomore Danny O'Keefe, Jimmy's younger brother, who came off the bench to rack up an impressive 26 points during the Minutemen's recent 80-49 drubbing of Burlington.

At this point, the team seems to be clicking on all cylinders and at times Farias' biggest challenge has been to find minutes for all his talent. With some victories being by such lopsided margins, many of the Minutemen reserves have seen some serious playing time this season.

Underclassmen like Brian Johnson, Lance Greene, Scott Tavares and Seniors Sam Schulsinger and Nick Lessin have been solid contributors to the team's cause.

Another factor that has helped the Minutemen's cause this year has been consistent free throw shooting, the importance of which Farias drums into his troops on a regular basis.

In a recent game against one of the stronger teams in the Middlesex League, Belmont, poor foul throw shooting by the opponents were their undoing as they allowed Lexington to pull away for a 65-52 victory in what initially was a hard fought contest

The boys have already qualified for the state tournament and now just have to close out their league games before they get into tournament play.

Jana Qiao

Mike Andryauskus has been key to Lexington's success this season.

All season long the team has benefitted from a strong attack from behind the three point line. This has been complemented by the powerful inside play of the front line

With six games to go in league play, the boys are focused on closing out a perfect season. It is not unrealistic to believe that they can reasonably set their sights on a sectional or even state championship, something that has eluded some very good Lexington teams in recent years.

For now the hoopsters will take it one game at a time. In this late season seige, Lexington can't move up in the standings until either BC High or Madison Park drops one of their games.

Simon Lehar

Boys Hockey Struggles

By Mike Kent

It has been a tough beginning for the Lexington Boys Hockey team this year. After losing some key seniors last year, like Alex Abramo, Ryan Gelnaw, and David Robinson, it has been tough to rebound with such a young and inexperienced team. Just six seniors, Andy Bergmann, Nick Pisegna, Chris Stratford, Pat Keegan, Sean Madigan, and John Bienkowski lead the reeling team.

Lexington put up a good fight against Winchester but came up just shy, losing 4-2. The Minuteman were down 2-0 in the third period and things weren't looking good for the Minutemen until Cory Woodward stole the puck at the Lexington blue line and put it home, getting Lexington on the board.

The Minuteman had the momentum going their way until Winchester scored a short time later putting them on top 3-1 more than half way through the third period. But Lexington didn't give up.

Chris Stratford ripped a shot past Winchester goalie Colin Currie, cutting the Winchester lead down to one. But it was too little too late as the Sachems added another late goal and took home the 4-2 victory.

Things didn't get much better the next week as Lexington faced off against the second best team in the Middlesex League, the Reading Rockets. The Minutemen were down 2-0 after the first period but were playing a very physical game.

But Lexington couldn't generate much offense as they only had 11 shots on net while Reading doubled their shot total. Things fell apart in the third period as the Rockets scored five unanswered goals and took a 9-0 lead.

Lexington avoided the shutout as Senior Captain Nick Pisegna made a nice pass to Cory Woodward and the junior forward knocked it home. With twenty-two seconds left, Reading scored again, ending the game 10-1 in favor of the Rockets.

One of the bright spots for Lexington was the play of Senior Goalie John Bienkowski who stopped two point blank shots in the second period for two of his 32 saves.

More recently, the Minutemen have turned things around a bit with a 3-1 win at Stoneham. Kyle Lakin potted the first goal on an assist from Craig Wood making it 1-0.

Later, Cory Woodward put in the Minutemen's second from Andy Bergmann and Nick Pisegna. Early in the third, Stoneham responded with a goal of their own, making it 2-1. But Woodward scored his second on an open net giving Lexington the 3-1 win.

As of mid-January the team has struggled to a 1-8-1 record. The young players continue to adjust to the competition, and good things may be in store for a rapidly developing Lexington team. With eleven games left in the season, nothing is set in stone.